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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002038

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PROP](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: CHINA URGES USG TO "RESTRICT" KADEER, DEATH TOLL
197 -- JULY 17 XINJIANG SITREP

REF: BEIJING 2023 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Ben Moeling.
Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Ministry of Public Security Vice Minister Liu Jing, in a July 17 meeting with FBI Director Robert Mueller, argued that the July 5 riot in Urumqi was a "terrorist activity," claiming that rioters were "professional and well-trained." The Director said outside observers will only be convinced of terrorist involvement if China publicizes its evidence. Both Liu, and later Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun, urged the Director to "restrict" the activities of Rebiya Kadeer and other "separatist" groups and individuals in the United States. Liu said that China was eager to boost counter terrorism cooperation with the United States. In Urumqi, Embassy officers reported that mosques opened for Friday prayers without incident. The official death toll rose to 197. Domestic newspapers reported, without providing figures, that Urumqi prosecutors were preparing to formally arrest some of those detained as a result of the violence. Authorities, however, have already started to release other individuals who were determined not to have committed any crimes. End Summary.

RIOT WAS "TERRORIST ACTIVITY"

12. (C) Vice Minister of Public Security Liu Jing, in a July 17 meeting with FBI Director Robert Mueller, said the July 5 riot constituted "premeditated, well-organized terrorist activity." The rioters were "professional, well-trained, and extremely brutal," Liu asserted, and killed many of their victims with a single blow. The riots were not the result of ethnic problems, Liu argued. Director Mueller urged China to release publicly any evidence of terrorist involvement in the riot. Without solid evidence of terrorism, Mueller said, outside observers will likely conclude the violence resulted from ethnic conflict. The USG has no evidence that Rebiya Kadeer incited the Xinjiang violence. Liu responded by saying that if China provides evidence against Rebiya Kadeer, then "I hope you can take action against her." At the very least, the United States must restrict her so that she cannot "harm

people further." Regarding recent Al Qaeda Islamic Magreb threats to carry out attacks on Chinese in Algeria and elsewhere, Liu and Director Mueller endorsed boosting cooperation and intelligence sharing to combat terrorism and prevent attacks on American and Chinese citizens. In the afternoon, Director Mueller received similar points from Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun on the need for the USG to "limit the activities" of East Turkistan "terrorist and separatist" organizations and individuals.

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 197

¶3. (U) Official media reported July 17 that the death toll from the July 5 riots rose from 192 to 197.

CALL TO PRAYER HEARD IN URUMQI

¶4. (C) Embassy officers, back in Urumqi July 17, reported that Friday prayers appeared to take place without incident at the "White Mosque" on Jiefang Nan Road. In contrast to the previous Friday, mosques were able to use loudspeakers to issue the call to prayer. Worshipers at the White Mosque overflowed onto the sidewalk. Across the street from the mosque, about 100 security personnel were standing guard, but these troops dispersed just as the afternoon prayer session was coming to an end. Unlike July 10, when many Urumqi mosques were closed, Post has heard of no reports of mosque closings July 17. Embassy officers witnessed no incidents

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of violence or protests July 17. Apparently because of Friday prayers, the security presence in Urumqi's Uighur section appeared slightly higher than it was July 15 or 16. Normal street life has returned to the Uighur neighborhoods following the deadly shooting of two Uighurs by police on Monday, July 13. Some, but not all, streets that had been closed to vehicle traffic after the Monday shooting were reopened to traffic Friday.

"CLOSING MOSQUES DOES NOT VIOLATE ISLAM"

¶5. (U) The Xinhua news agency quoted an official at the China Islamic Association as saying that closing mosques in times of disease, war, or social instability does not violate Islam. The official said religious leaders in Urumqi decided themselves to close mosques in the aftermath of the riots and this did not represent a violation of religious freedom.

MEDIA REPORTS SOME DETAINEES RELEASED

¶6. (U) A story in the July 17 Beijing News (Xinjing Bao) reported that Urumqi prosecutors will soon conclude screening of the initial groups of people arrested in connection with the July 5 riot. The article, without providing any figures, says that some detainees will soon be formally arrested while those determined not to have committed crimes were gradually being released. These releases will promote greater stability, according to the report.

GOLDBERG